

VZCZCXRO7379
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHVN #0125/01 0451123
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 141123Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0889
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2096
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0308
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0971
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0135
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0215
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0102
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1134
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0192
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0510
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 7749
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0588
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0122
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 VIENTIANE 000125

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR G, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP, EAP/EX, EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR,
OES/STC(BATES), OES/IHA (SINGER AND COMELLA), MED, AND H

STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH (CARROLL, CLEMENTS, AND
JENNINGS)

STATE PASS TO USTR (BISBEE)

STATE PASS TO HHS/OGHA (WSTEIGER, ELVANDER, AND ABHAT)

USDA PASS TO APHIS

SECDEF FOR OSD/ISA/AP (STERN)

BANGKOK FOR RMO, DCD, USAID (MACARTHUR AND BRADY)

ROME FOR RAO

USPACOM ALSO FOR FPA HUSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [PREL](#) [AMED](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#)

ETRD, LA

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: AI FOUND IN BIRDS IN VIENTIANE (WEEKLY
REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 14, 2007)

REF: VIENTIANE 36

VIENTIANE 00000125 001.2 OF 003

11. SUMMARY: The Lao government's avian influenza (AI) coordinator told donors on February 13 that two wild ducks in Vientiane had tested positive for avian influenza. Tests on two possible human cases are underway; initial results are negative. END SUMMARY.

Reports of H5N1 Positive Ducks in Vientiane

12. There is a new outbreak of avian influenza in Vientiane. Dr. Bounnlay Phommasack, Director of the National Avian and Human Influenza Coordinating Office (NAHICO), announced in an AI Ministerial Donor Meeting on February 13 positive H5N1 infections in otherwise healthy ducks screened at the National Center for Animal Health. Chicken deaths attributed to an AI outbreak in Si Chiang

Mai District, Nong Khai Province, Thailand (directly across the Mekong River from Vientiane) in January 2007 prompted intensive monitoring for possible bird and human cases in Lao villages on the opposite bank of the Mekong River. While over 70 chicken deaths were found negative for H5N1, surveillance of over 2000 live chicken and ducks in Vientiane Capital yielded two positive "roaming" ducks in Dongsabath Village, Sisattanak, Vientiane Municipality, on the basis of Direct Rapid Antigen Detection Testing at the National Center for Animal Health. Specimens have been sent to Vietnam for confirmatory purposes (vice Thailand as in the case during the Saythany H5N1 outbreak in July 2006).

Testing for Human H5N1 Cases

13. The National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE) carried out first-time testing for two human "cases under investigation" with newly established functional RT-PCR laboratory capacity. Initial results are negative; these findings will be confirmed at the NIID (Japan) as part of the WHO Worldwide Influenza Surveillance Network.

14. The CDC Vietnam AI Coordinator was able to procure urgently needed reagent from his colleagues at the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology/Hanoi, despite the fact that it was Tet New Year. Unfortunately, it took Fedex three days to fly the reagent from Hanoi to Vientiane - a one-hour plane trip apart. Although the epidemiology does not appear compatible with a possible H5N1 infection, this testing capability, established by the CDC-WHO collaboration in Laos, adds significantly to detection and surveillance efforts.

Emergency Response Training

VIENTIANE 00000125 002.2 OF 003

15. The Assistant Director, Office of Terrorism, Preparedness and Emergency Response, and the Senior Operations Management Consultant, US CDC, provided instruction on the Automated Disaster and Emergency Planning Tool (ADEPT) at the invitation of the National Avian and Human Influenza Coordinating Office (NAHICO). NAHICO Director Dr. Bounlay Phommassack said that ADEPT has the potential to help the GOL prepare a National Avian and Influenza Response Plan (not to be confused with the established National Avian and Human Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Plan). Participants were particularly impressed with ADEPT's ability to introduce managerial vice tasking input in assigning responsibilities, and to organize a process involving disparate groups, e.g., security, health, environmental sanitation, logistics and warehousing, agriculture, etc. A tentative implementation schedule was provided to NAHICO after discussions with US CDC Laos, FAO, and WHO. The CDC representatives were advised by the Embassy Infectious Diseases Coordinator to consult with the US CDC Influenza Division is strengthening the scientific worth of measures as related to avian influenza.

Local Training

16. The CDC-WHO collaboration continued its support for projects throughout Laos, with "train the trainer" regional workshops targeting: a) rapid district level responders in Oudom Xay, Champassak, and Luang Prabang Provinces; and b) clinical providers in Luang Prabang, Champassak, and Savannakhet provincial Hospitals.

17. The Embassy's Infectious Diseases Coordinator participated in the Inter-Regional Knowledge Sharing Series on Avian and Human Influenza; Seminal 3 - Compensation Policies: Issues and Good Practices. Requested from participants was greater commentary on the use of non-monetary compensation packages, particularly in countries, including Laos, that have weak financial mechanisms to ensure equitable, reasonable, and uncorrupted distribution. One example provided was buying into vaccinated local bird stocks, particularly where national coverage is little or none.

18. The Embassy's Infectious Diseases Coordinator is participating

in a WHO Checklist Review to ensure surveillance and laboratory compliance with newly established measures as part of the Internal Health Regulations (IHR). Focus has been on better incorporating the Early Warning Outbreak Recognition System (EWORS) network into National Outbreak Response Activities.

Louis Pasteur Institute in Laos

¶9. The Minister of Health, Dr. Ponemek Dalaloy, presented the proposed organization of the new Lao National Institute of Hygiene, Epidemiology, Prevention and Promotion (LANIHEPP) to the AI Donor

VIENTIANE 00000125 003.2 OF 003

Group. He outlined the organizational framework that would comprise the Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology, alongside that of an Institute Pasteur Lao (IPL). Emphasizing that LANIHEPP would be a Lao entity preserving Lao National Reference Diagnostic ownership and prerogative, the Minister said that the envisioned IPL would provide critical research and training assistance and support.

¶10. The Minister used the AI donor group as the forum to familiarize the international community with the proposed LANIHEPP. The GOL sought to enlist support in making up the current 5.5 million euro shortfall of the projected 8.8 million euro projected cost. The EU Representative suggested a re-direction of funds recently obligated from the World Bank Trust in support of AI Pandemic capacity building initiatives. Ambassador Haslach supported the concept of a LANIHEPP (to include the Institute Pasteur Lao) provided that this remains a Lao National Institution - and that issues concerning sharing and proprietary ownership are addressed. She advised the Minister to also look to the private philanthropic sector in the United States and elsewhere for support in realizing the LANIHEPP vision.

¶11. The Minister of Health has since expressed interest in visiting New York as part of a trip to North America to seek out possible assistance from Rockefeller and other possible funding sources.

HASLACH